

Minutes
Finance Committee Meeting
2:30pm, September 22, 2015
First Floor-North Conference Room, City Hall

Present: Vice Mayor Marc Hunt (Chair), Councilman Gordon Smith,
Councilwoman Gwen Wisler

Staff: Paul Fetherston, Barbara Whitehorn, Roderick Simmons,
Chief Tammy Hooper, Cpt. Stony Gonce, Tony McDowell,
Frank McGowan, Cheryl Heywood

Approval of 4/28/2015 Minutes

The committee approved the 4/28 minutes.

Friends of the Nature Center Update

Barbara Whitehorn said the purpose today was to give a financial update in regard to the Nature Center's change in fees and the projected impact on the subsidy over a three year period. (Attachment 1). We are seeing what we anticipated since the fee increases were implemented. The \$100,000 commitment from Friends of the Nature Center (FONC) is reflected in these numbers and we just received the first of four quarterly payments of \$25,000 that was deposited last week. Vice Mayor said that he understood there is an arrangement with the county that they would write a check to the city, so that the admission charge was the same for residents and non-residents. Ms. Whitehorn said that we have a new agreement with the Friends and the County. The County gives the Nature Center \$36,000 and then the Friends remits it to us, and we apply that to each admission from the County as they come in. When the \$36,000 is spent, the admission price will go back up. Councilwoman asked staff if we would get quarterly financials as well as an operational report from the Friends. Ms. Whitehorn said their quarterly report is due by the last day of October and that information will be available for the November finance committee meeting as well as updates on the Memo of Understanding (MOU). Councilwoman Wisler asked that FONC members be invited to the finance committee meeting when updates are given. Ms. Whitehorn reported that the Nature Center is currently hiring for a permanent Executive Director position. The full quarterly financial report will be presented to the committee during the October Finance Committee meeting.

Aston Park Tennis Center Update

Frank McGowan told the committee that staff was charged with looking at ways to reduce the level of subsidy the city was providing to the Aston Park Tennis Center. A cost of services study was done by an outside consultant, Matrix Consulting Group. The subsequent recommendations for a 3 year step up program were approved by City Council. Mr. McGowan reviewed the revenue and expenses for the Center. (Attachment 2) with the committee and said that we are coming in about where we

expected. Although there was a decrease in the number of pass holders, the pass holder revenue increased by \$15,000. Due to the cost study recommendations, we did not make any adjustment in the daily court fee rate since the fee was receiving full cost recovery. There was an overall increase of \$24,000 in admission revenue. The beginning of the fiscal year hits right in the middle of tennis season (April through November), so we are still selling some discounted passes for the year but the season will be coming to a close soon.

Councilman Wisler asked if staff could show the revenue numbers for the season (April thorough November) instead of on a fiscal basis. She also asked for staff to provide the fiscal, operational and customer impact of the tennis tournaments held at Aston Park Tennis Center. This update will be provided to the committee at the October finance committee meeting. Ms. Whitehorn said the quarterly updates are due at the end of the month, so the update would be presented to the committee the following month. For instance, the first quarter report is due the end of September and will be presented to the committee at the October meeting.

Policy Review on Festival Funding Requests/Partner Agreements (Attachment 3)

Mr. Powers said that two years ago, this process moved to Economic Development to align more with council goals of engagement, resources and sustainability and he would like to review where we currently are in the three year process. Three year partnerships have been developed with YMI, Heritage and the Downtown Association for a total of five events. MOOG fest achieved the required economic development goals and went to council and received a 3 year grant. LEAF agreed to a one year partnership. There is one year left on the cycle and Mr. Powers asked the committee if there was any intent to change the cycle or leave as is. We currently provide fee waivers and in-kind services but the understanding is to have these events become self-sustaining at the end of the 3 year period. There is clear evidence that shows that cities that hold these events attract talent and people to come to the city, which leads to economic growth.

DWI Task Force Grant

Cpt. Stony Gonce said that we are seeking support to fund year three continuation of the DWI task force grant. (Attachment 4) The federal funding we are receiving is through the national highway traffic safety administration through the governor's highway safety program. Year one began in October, 2013 and October 1 of this coming year officially begins year 3 for the grant. We are seeking \$80,197 for the City's portion of the co-funding at 30%. Year one was funded at 100% by the state, year 2 at 85% and 15% local, and this year is 70% state and 30% local funding. We have a portion that is pass through funding that comes through the Buncombe County Sheriff's office, because they provide two deputies for the task force. Vice Mayor asked when we go to year 4 and 5, the federal portion shrinks, and our portion grows. Next year (year 4) would require the 50% match, which would be \$133,000 and the next year would be 100% fully funded by the City at \$267,000. Vice Mayor Hunt asked if we are contractually committed to the \$133,000 next year

and the \$267,000 the year after that or are we committed to just one year at a time. Mr. Gonce said that contractually, we sign a year at a time with the understanding that we would commit to the four full years. After the 4th year we could decide if we want to continue. The challenge is that if we don't contract to fund year 3 or 4, future requests for funding are likely to be frowned upon by those funding agencies. Councilman Smith said when council approved this, there was an understanding that it was likely that we would not be able to fund year 5, and that more funding sources need to be developed. With all the emphasis on local beer, drunk driving is a far greater challenge to take on that it was five or ten years ago, and this work is important.

This item will move forward to the next full council meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:20p.m.